

the country, attracting capital investment and interest from around the globe and we are proud to have Evergreen be a part of our community. We are appreciative of the commitment Evergreen has made to our area and look forward to continued success together.

Mr. PELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE FACILITATION ACT

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, I am informed that there will be a Republican objection to the unanimous-consent request regarding the short-term extension of the Middle East Peace Facilitation Act, also known as MEPFA.

MEPFA was enacted by the Congress in 1994, to give the President much-needed flexibility to help Israel and the Palestinians implement their historic peace treaty. Under the terms of MEPFA, the President can waive certain restrictions against the PLO. In essence, this means the President can provide assistance to the Palestinians, and the PLO can operate an office in the United States.

MEPFA is a vital component of American support for the peace process—both practically and symbolically. On a practical level, U.S. assistance for the Palestinians has helped the fledgling Palestinian Authority to get off the dime and provide desperately needed services to the people of the West Bank and Gaza. Both Israeli and Palestinian officials agree that if their peace agreement is to succeed, there must be a dramatic improvement in the everyday lives of the Palestinian people. They must be aware of the fruits of peace.

U.S. assistance, much of which is channeled through the World Bank's fund for the Palestinians, has helped the donor community secure additional funding from other sources. With the United States leading by example, other nations have come forth with significant donations to help the Palestinians.

The United States has also used MEPFA to influence the Palestinian leadership to move in certain directions. MEPFA guarantees that our aid be transferred only if the Palestinians are complying with the letter and spirit of their peace agreements with Israel. Using our assistance as leverage, the United States has been able to ensure that the Palestinians stand by their word on critical issues such as preventing terrorism against Israel.

Israel's leaders have said that the Palestinians are doing much better when it comes to preventing terrorism, a fact which United States officials confirm. And that, in my view, is the bottom line for the success of the Israel-PLO peace treaty. If the PLO prevents acts of terrorism, then Israelis will feel more secure, more comfortable with the peace agreement.

Only then will Israelis and Palestinians establish a truly lasting peace.

On a symbolic level, MEPFA is a very powerful instrument. MEPFA symbolizes the U.S. commitment to be the honest broker of the peace process. MEPFA is a signal to the Palestinians—and indeed to the rest of the world—that the United States is willing to suspend its laws against the PLO to give peace a real chance. In a certain sense, it resembles the dictum put forth during the Reagan administration regarding the former Soviet Union—"trust, but verify." In effect, we have said to the Palestinians we will trust them to fulfill their agreements, and that they will receive our blessing as long as they remain faithful.

The objection lodged earlier today puts all of that at risk. Our Republican colleagues are endangering the Middle East peace process by refusing to allow a brief, short-term extension of current laws. At a time when our traditional ally, Israel, is taking enormous risks for peace, the objection sends just the wrong signal. The objection says that some of us are unwilling to support our best friend in the Middle East, at the very time it needs us the most.

It is even more perplexing to realize that the Senate has already debated, and for all intents and purposes, resolved the substance of this issue. The Senate passed a long-term extension of MEPFA as part of the foreign operations bill, and this short-term extension is only necessary to get us to the point where the foreign ops bill becomes law.

Under these circumstances, it's hard to imagine that the objection raised goes directly to the merits of the bill. I would hope that the points I have made would help to convince my colleagues of the importance of acting on this measure today, and if possible, immediately.

It troubles me that there is a willingness among some of my colleagues to jeopardize the Middle East peace process. I would hope on an issue of such critical importance to our Nation's security, we could put aside differences and deal directly with the matter at hand.

I am very concerned that we are running out of time—MEPFA expires at midnight tonight, and the House could go into recess early this evening. I hope very much that we can resolve this issue quickly, but if we cannot, there should be no doubt about the consequences and about where the responsibility lies. I am ready to pass this short-term extension here and now, and in all sincerity, I would ask anyone with an objection to come to the floor so that we might reach an agreement.

THE INTERNATIONAL WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL FOR THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Mr. PELL. Mr. President, today I wish to address an issue which holds

great significance for the international world order. The subject is the International War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, a body which can contribute greatly to the reconciliation of the parties to this brutal conflict. As a guarantor of respect for the rule of law and for the protection of human rights, this tribunal supports the principles upon which any lasting peace must be founded. As the peace negotiations among the Bosnian Serbs, Croats, and Moslems begin tomorrow in Dayton, OH, today is an opportune time to reaffirm that the work of the tribunal is a separate but equally important step in the effort to rebuild civil society in the region. No matter the outcome of this round of negotiations, the work of the War Crimes Tribunal must go forward with strong U.S. support.

Mr. President, over the last few days, we have been horrified by a series of front page stories and photos of the terrible atrocities that have occurred in Bosnia. These press reports indicate that United States intelligence has been instrumental in locating mass graves in Bosnia. Those revelations, when paired with refugee accounts of the terrifying trek from Srebrenica to Central Bosnia, suggest that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Moslem men and boys were murdered by the Bosnian Serbs. The United States should place a high priority on collecting information related to these atrocities and on making all evidence available to the War Crimes Tribunal. Just as the tribunals at Nuremberg punished the aggressors and facilitated the reconciliation efforts after World War II, so too must this War Crimes Tribunal redress the horrors that have occurred in Bosnia. I am proud to say that my father, the late Herbert C. Pell, a former Congressman from New York City, was President Franklin Roosevelt's representative on the U.N. War Crimes Commission that laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Nuremberg tribunal. Today, we must support this new tribunal to ensure that the injustices of the war in Bosnia are corrected.

The objectives of the tribunal are threefold: To deter further crimes by the war parties, to punish those responsible for war crimes, and to ensure justice during and after the process of reconciliation and reconstruction of Bosnia. Through the public identification, trial, and conviction of war criminals, the international community hopes to contribute to the peace process by demonstrating the strength and effectiveness of international human rights law. The U.N. Security Council created the tribunal in May of 1993, and the court convened for the first time in November of that year. Yet the progress of the tribunal has been slow.